Among the Wonderful
A Novel, by Stacy Carlson
(Siebert Press, 9781586422011, $19.95)

“Among the Wonderful is an historical novel rich with images of 1840s Manhattan and the exhibits—both living and preserved—that populated P. T. Barnum’s American Museum. Outwardly freakish but inwardly just like you and me, the living, breathing, feeling human characters Stacy Carlson has created remind us of our common humanity. Ana Swift, one of Barnum’s human exhibits, draws us into this world of hawkers and gawkers and voyeurs with uncommon intelligence, heart, and grace. A remarkably beautiful story with characters that will stay with you long after the last page is turned. This is a book you will want to read again.”
—Susan Morgan, The Yankee Bookshop, Woodstock, VT

The Angel Esmeralda
Nine Stories, by Don DeLillo
(Scribner, 9781451659922, $15)

“This is the book DeLillo fans have been waiting for—his first collection of short stories written between 1979 and 2011. In these stories, DeLillo takes global themes and ideas, the conflicts we often don’t want to acknowledge, and makes them human. The subjects are true and resonant: a jagger who witnesses a kidnapping, an elderly nun working in poverty-stricken New York, an astronaut looking down on a war-ravaged Earth. Each story is textured in DeLillo’s precise, startling voice, one that can shout and whisper at the same time.”
—Michael Karpus, Books & Books, Bal Harbour, FL

Arcadia
A Novel, by Lauren Groff
(Anchor, 9780307476531, $14.95)

“Groff has penned another funny, odd yet breezy read, considering it’s set among the damned hordes of hell. Thirteen-year-old narrator Madison, the sassy, cynical offspring of a world-famous, self-absorbed actress and a billionaire, has been rather inexplicably sent to hell after dying of a marijuana overdose. Leaning up with a teen-movie superflata of side characters, Madison must find her true place in the overall scheme of things, while praying all along that it’s not an eternity of telemarketing.”
—Whitney Spottles, Schuler Books & Music, Lansing, MI

The Kitchen Counter Cooking School
How a Few Simple Lessons Transformed Nine Culinary Novices into Fearless Home Cooks, by Kathleen Flinn
(Penguin, 9780143122273, $16)

“Flinn’s love of cooking led her to study at Le Cordon Bleu and her first book, The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry. After helping a clueless cook school for healthy food at the supermarket, Flinn realized that most Americans are lost when it comes to feeding themselves and their families. She began a project to transform the cooking and buying habits of nine volunteers through cooking lessons. This is a fascinating study of the reliance of Americans on pre-packaged food and the importance of cooking for health and nourishment.”
—Avery Dickey, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL

Remembering the Music
Forgetting the Words
Travels With Mom in the Land of Dementia, by Kate Whouley
(Beacon Press, 9780807003312, $16)

“Kate Whouley recounts her mother’s journey into Alzheimer’s with heart-wrenching honesty and heart-warming compassion. The book explores the complex relationship they shared as child, the nature of friendship, and the world of aging and dementia. Ultimately, it is about what it means to be a caring human being. It made me laugh. It made me cry. It touched me deeply. I loved this book.”
—Chuck Robinson, Village Books, Bellingham, WA

Rin Tin Tin
The Life and the Legend, by Susan Orlean
(Simon & Schuster, 9781439190142, $16)

“This is the story of a young man whose fateful journey collides with that of a battlefield puppy, setting into motion an extraordinary tale of devotion. Orlean unfolds a riveting account of the history of both the German shepherd, whose breed exemplifies the good-natured qualities that have made dog and human relationships unparalleled in society, and of early American movie making. The result is a wonderful odyssey beautifully depicting loyalty and friendship in a remarkable history lesson and an entertaining read.”
—Megan Bruce, Watermark Books & Café, Wichita, KS

The Sisters
A Novel, by Nancy Jensen
(St. Martin’s Griffin, 9780312548414, $14.99)

“This is a powerful story of family through three generations, beginning with two sisters from a small town in Kentucky. In 1927, a tragedy and a misunderstanding separate them when they are both in their teens. We follow their stories and those of their daughters up to 2007. Jensen shows us that strong women are able to live cobbled together out of fear and pain as building blocks to create something resembling happiness, or at least stability. A page-turner with characters that remain with the reader long after the book is closed.”
—Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books, Orinda, CA

When She Woke
A Novel, by Hillary Jordan
(Algonquin, 9781602103107, $14.95)

“Inspired by The Scarlet Letter, this is a stunning, suspenseful, and scary look at what happens to Hannah Payne when she is arrested and convicted of having an abortion in a futuristic America. Her punishment is to become a ‘chrome,’ a criminal whose skin color is genetically altered to reflect her crime. Hannah becomes a Red for the crime of murder, and she further complicates her situation by refusing to name the father of her unborn child. Once chromed, she is released and must survive as best she can. Her navigation through the perils of a hostile society launches Hannah on a journey of self-discovery and makes readers question the consequences of politicizing the personal.”
—Erica Caldwell, Present Tense, Batavia, NY